



LOCAL ANTENATAL COURSES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

STEP BY STEP BATHING OF YOUR BABY

- A calm, warm environment is essential. Choose a time when you will not have to rush, when you aren't likely to be interrupted, and where you can get on with things in your own way and in your own time.
- Make sure it's the right time for your baby too, that she has been fed so she isn't screaming with hunger, and definitely do not try a bath when your baby would much rather be having a nap. She'll scream with tiredness throughout, you both will end up exhausted and your baby will probably be sick in the bath water, she's so cross.
- Baths are meant to be enjoyable for all concerned. If your baby hates them, you can probably get away with topping and tailing for a week. If your baby loves them, you can give her one every day.
- Have everything ready before hand,
 - warm dry towel
 - a spare warm, dry towel
 - sponge
 - baby shampoo if you like
 - A jug containing warm water to rinse your baby's head- don't use the bath-water to do this – it could leave shampoo residue on your baby's scalp and this can cause irritation.
- You'll need a small baby bath. Prepare this beforehand, too, so that everything's ready when you undress your baby- make sure the water is not too hot or cold.

After a couple of weeks, when your baby's neck is stronger and she'll enjoy it more, you may take her in the bath with you. If you do this, have someone on standby to lift her out. Again, the temperature of the water should suit the baby, not you.

- Most babies hate getting their heads wet, so the hair washing part of the bath should be done as quickly as possible. If she starts to scream as soon as she feels the first drop on her scalp, don't persevere, just quickly wipe over her head with a dampened sponge and try again another day.

SLEEP FACTS

- Newborn babies do need a lot of sleep, 18 hours a day is not unusual. If your baby seems to be having less than this, it may be because she is having it in short bursts



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rather than long naps.

- Sleep is good for babies. Growth hormones reach high levels while they sleep, and your baby needs time to rest and recuperate from the constant new stimulus of the world
- Babies need feeding at night. She needs food at frequent intervals, so you have to expect her to ask for it at least until she is three or four months.
- Babies' sleep patterns will change radically during the first six months of life. By the time your baby is six months old, she may well be sleeping 10 and 12 hour (even if this is broken) with two or three hours during the day, often in two distinct naps morning and afternoon.

Encouraging your child to settle

- First of all babies do not seem to have a clear and inbuilt mechanism instructing them that we are active by day and sleepy by night. They start off sleeping and waking randomly through the 24hours. You can speed up the process by making a clear difference between going to bed for the night and ordinary naps, from the beginning.
- Put her down to sleep in the cot and room that he is going to spend the night, rather than putting him in his pram somewhere else in the house as you might do during the day.
- Take extra trouble to make the baby comfortable. If you are merely putting her to bed for a daytime nap, it may not matter very much to you if a burp wakes her a little later. When it is night, try to ensure that she has finished with burping and that nothing you can foresee is going to disturb her.
- Darken the room sufficiently to make it seem different from daytime, and to ensure that when she opens her eyes (as all babies do from time to time during the night) her attention is not caught by anything brightly lit or clearly visible. But leave a dim (15 watt) light on so that you can attend to her during the night without switching on more lights.
- Keep night feeds as sleepy and as brief as possible. The baby is bound to wake up because she cannot yet get through the night without food and drink, but the less completely she awakens, the better. Make sure before you leave her, that everything you will need during the night is gathered together. You don't want to have to carry her around while you search for a nappy.
- When she cries at night, go to her as quickly as possible so that she has no time to get into a wakeful misery. Don't play and talk while you feed her, concentrate on

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soothing cuddles instead. Daytime feeds are social playtimes but night feeds are for sustenance only.

- Have a definite “winding down” routine for the evening, for example; looking at a book, bath, feed, change and donning of ritual “night-clothes” (even if these are indistinguishable from the day clothes as your baby only wears sleepsuits)
- Don’t get your baby used to falling asleep only in certain situations (like in the car or the pram or at the breast) as she will come to associate these circumstances with sleep and you will find yourself driving around the block at 3am.
- Keep the room at a comfortable temperature; 18 degrees c (65 degrees Fahrenheit) is ideal.
- Let your baby settle herself to sleep if she can; for example; don’t rush to pick her up the instant her eyes flutter open during the day – she may want to gently drift off again.
- Keep the atmosphere in the house as calm and relax as you can, but don’t tiptoe round her and feel you have to stay quite, the womb is one of the noisiest places on earth – heartbeats, gurgling, joint movements, hearing people talking – and your baby fell asleep there.

Debra Jonckers – 1999-06-04

References, Baby and child- Penelope Leach

BECOMING A Family – Anna Mcgrail